

DRAFT
Virginia Cave Board
Saturday, September 22, 2007
Natural Tunnel State Park, Duffield, Virginia

Virginia Cave Board Members Present

Mr. Thomas Lera, Chairman
Ms Andrea Futrell, Vice Chairman
Mr. Andrew Harrison
Dr. John R. Holsinger
Ms. Judy Molnar
Mr. David Socky

Virginia Cave Board Members Not Present

Dr. David C. Culver
Ms. Babs Melton
Ms. Barbara L. Moss
Mr. Jesse Richardson
Ms. Claire Ward
Virginia Department of Historical Resources representative

DCR Staff Present

Mr. Bill Balfour
Mr. Joey Fagan
Mr. Larry Smith
Mr. Tom Smith
Mr. Wil Orndorff
Mr. Claiborne Woodall
Ms. Carol Zokaite

Others Present

Mr. John Fox
Mr. Charles Maus
Mr. Roy D. Powers
Mr. John Taylor
Mr. John Tichenor
Mr. Mark H. Woods

Call to Order

Mr. Tom Lera called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. following a presentation to the Cave Board on the Cave Resources of Cumberland Gap National Historic Park by Superintendent Mark Woods. Mr. Lera declared a quorum was present.

Introduction and Announcements

Mr. Lera welcomed members, staff, and guests.

Approval of Minutes from March 24, 2007

MOTION: Mr. David Socky moved that the minutes of the March 24, 2007 meeting of the Virginia Cave Board be approved as corrected.

SECOND: Ms. Judy Molnar seconded

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

.

Treasury Report

Mr. Larry Smith reported \$1972.47 is in the Cave Board treasury.

Old Business

Education and Outreach Committee

Mr. Tom Lera reported that the most recent issue of the Virginia Cave Owners Newsletter was published in June 2007. Mr. Smith reported the Richmond Area Speleological Society (RASS) has donated \$1000 to the Cave Board to be applied toward the cost of publishing and distributing the newsletter. A letter will be sent to RASS to express thanks for their donation.

The Cave Board intends to publish the Virginia Cave Owners Newsletter two times each year. The next issue will be published in March 2008 featuring a Virginia Cave Week theme.

The next Virginia Cave Week will be observed from April 20 to 26, 2008 during Earth Day week (Earth Day is held on April 22 every year). Handouts and internet resources will be developed and updated.

Joint Technical Committee

Ms. Andrea Futrell reported on the work of the DCR Stormwater Technical Advisory Committee that is making revisions to Virginia's stormwater regulations. Mr. Wil Orndorff reported that the new proposed rules contain provisions to address karst.

Mr. Orndorff gave an update on the Rocky Hollow Cave vandalism court case in Wise County where an individual is charged with a violation of the Virginia Cave Protection Act. Damage to the cave gate at Rocky Hollow Cave was repaired the week prior to this meeting of the Cave Board. Mr. Lera will write a letter to the Commonwealth Attorney requesting an extension of the dates for a required graffiti clean up in the cave due to the sensitivity of the Indiana Bats' during winter hibernation.

Mr. Orndorff and Mr. Smith reported on the September 21, 2007 meeting between representatives of the Virginia Cave Board, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, and officials from Scott County to discuss the importance of protecting the significant karst resources in Rye Cove and in other parts of Scott County.

The Cave Board will hold public education and outreach event at Natural Tunnel State Park the evening following the meeting on Saturday, September 22, 2007. The event will feature Dr. John Holsinger as he describes the Caves of Rye Cove.

Virginia DCR Natural Heritage Karst Program and Karst Education Report

Mr. Orndorff reported that work to develop conservation site for designated significant caves in Virginia will be completed by the November 3, 2007 meeting of the Cave Board.

Ms. Carol Zokaite reported that Babs Melton hosted and assisted with a Project Underground workshop for educators at Crystal Caverns. Ms. Zokaite continues to hold many Project Underground workshops throughout the state.

Other Old Business

Approval of Expenses

MOTION: Ms. Judy Molnar moved that the Virginia Cave Board accept up to \$1100 in expenses associated with the Virginia Cave Board Meeting and Cave Conservation Partners Roundtable Meeting being held during the weekend of September 22, 2007 at Natural Tunnel State Park.

SECOND: Mr. Socky seconded.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Grand Caverns

Ms. Molnar reports the Upper Valley Regional Park Authority, which administers Grand Caverns, has developed the Living South River learning stations and exhibits in partnership with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Headwaters Soil and Water Conservation District, and the South River Science Team. Ms. Molnar noted that a group of middle school students from the Rockingham County area recently visited the Living South River facility and learned about the water cycle and aquatic biology of the South River. The Living South River facility is located next to the entrance of Grand Caverns.

Ms. Molnar reported that a lightning strike had damaged the lighting system inside Grand Caverns. The repair required the replacement of 1000 feet of electrical cable. This is the second such incident in three years.

New Business

Strategic Planning: Tasks and goals for the Virginia Cave Board

Mr. Lera discussed the future of the Virginia Cave Board. He noted that the Board was making an effort to be more proactive; this is demonstrated by the meeting between Cave Board representatives and Scott County officials to discuss karst protection (see above). The Cave Conservation Partners Roundtable Meeting, being held in conjunction with this meeting, is another example of the Board's move to become more proactive.

Other New Business

Caves on VDOT Rights of Way

Mr. Lera noted that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is the largest single landowner of caves in the Commonwealth. Several of the VDOT caves are quite large. Mr. Rick Lambert, the President of the Virginia Speleological Survey has expressed an interest in opening and managing several VDOT caves on VDOT rights-of-way, including Route 84 Cave and Billy Williams Cave. Mr. Lera will contact Mr. Lambert for additional information. A report will be made at the next Board meeting.

Proposed Endless Caverns Development

Dr. John Holsinger reported on local opposition to a proposed development by the owners of Endless Caverns.

Underground Storage Tank Guideline in Karst Areas

Mr. Andrew Harrison noted that there are no specific guidelines for underground storage tanks (USTs) in karst areas. He suggested the Cave Board should provide the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) with guidelines to address associated with USTs in karst areas.

Mr. Orndorff noted recent problems due to leaking underground storage tanks in karst areas in the Town of Wytheville and in the community of Adwolf. Currently there is no DCR Natural Heritage Environmental Review of USTs by DEQ.

Significant Cave List

Mr. Lera noted that the Cave Board holds the responsibility of maintaining the list of Significant Caves in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Cave Board has delegated the job of compiling the list to the Virginia Speleological Survey (VSS), but the Board reviews and ultimately approves the official list of Virginia Significant Caves. Mr. Socky will report on the current VSS list of significant caves for review and approval by the Cave Board at their next meeting.

Public Comments and Announcements

Mr. Lera announced the “Cave Conservation Café” would be held on October 23, 2007 at the US Department of Agriculture’s Whitten Building in Washington, DC. The event will feature several speakers, a panel discussion on cave conservation, and a showing of the film “Caves: Life Beneath the Forest Floor.”

(<http://www.cavebiota.com/screenings/washingtondc.htm>).

The National Cave and Karst Management Symposium will be held October 8 – 12, 2007 at Saint Louis, Missouri. Ms. Zokaite and Mr. Joey Fagan of the DCR Karst Program are presenting papers at the symposium. (<http://www.nckms.org>).

The Second Appalachian Karst Symposium will be held May 7 – 10, 2008 at East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. Sponsorships are being solicited. (www.etsu.edu/physics/appkarst).

The 15th International Congress of Speleology will be held July 19-26, 2009 at Kerrville, Texas. One of the planned pre-congress excursions will feature a tour of many of the finest show caves in the Appalachian Mountains and will include visits to Endless Caverns and Grand Caverns. (<http://www.ics2009.us>).

Thanks to Natural Tunnel State Park for Hosting

Mr. Lera expressed thanks, on behalf of the Virginia Cave Board, to Natural Tunnel State Park and the Cove Ridge Center for hosting this meeting of the Board

Dates for Future Cave Board Activities

- Meeting: November 3, 2007 at Luray Caverns, Luray, Virginia
- Meeting: March 15, 2008 at Richmond, Virginia

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Socky moved that the meeting be adjourned.

SECOND: Dr. Holsinger seconded.

DISCUSSION: None.

VOTE: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Lera adjourned the meeting at 3:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Lera
Board Chairman

Joseph H. Fagan
Secretary